

Child Participation Mechanism consultancy

Terms of Reference, 25 March 2026



Background

The Barnahus Network is committed to strengthening child participation across its activities and governance, ensuring that children are meaningfully involved in shaping the Barnahus Network's governance, policies, practices and priorities.

As a member-led network composed of diverse national contexts and institutional arrangements, the Barnahus Network requires a participation mechanism that is feasible, sustainable, ethical, and aligned with its governance model.

The Barnahus Network is therefore commissioning the development of a concept for strengthening child participation in the context of our work, including an assessment of whether establishing a Child Advisory Board is the most appropriate mechanism, or whether alternative or complementary approaches would better achieve meaningful participation.

This assignment can be completed by an individual consultant, or a team of consultants.

Purpose

To explore options for child participation within the Barnahus network, including establishing a concept for child participation within the Barnahus Network, to ensure child participation, including space, voice, audience and influence in the Barnahus Network, considering its:

- Member-led governance structure and diversity in members
- Existing participation initiatives within member organisations and other potential collaboration partners
- Operational capacity of the Secretariat, including both human and financial resources
- Ethical and safeguarding considerations
- Intended outcomes of participation

In completing the tasks and deliverables, the consultant will engage with: The Barnahus Network secretariat, the Barnahus Network child participation working group, selected member organisations, where appropriate and feasible, children or young persons involved with members, and others as relevant.

In completing the tasks and deliverables, the consultant will for example engage in desk review of relevant literature and models, including those applied by Barnahus network members, review of Barnahus Network structures and needs, stakeholder consultations and interview, comparative analysis, resource feasibility assessment.

Scope and tasks

Inception phase: The consultant will develop a brief note outlining the methodology and timeline for completing the tasks and deliverables of this assignment.

Deliverable: Methodology and timeline, max 2 pages, in English.

Options analysis: The consultant will analyse whether establishing a child advisory board represents the most effective and sustainable approach for the Barnahus Network, or if there are other options that are preferable.

The consultant should explore alternative or complimentary mechanisms, including connecting to participation initiatives among the members, an online participation platform, child participation embedded in the child participation working group, other working groups or in events, thematic consultations, hybrid models etc.

The options paper should present the respective options, and include an analysis should identify comparative advantages, risks, resource implications, and feasibility of other options, and provide solid recommendations and arguments for, or against, the respective options.

Deliverable: “Options paper”, max 3 pages, in English.

Child Participation Concept development: Drawing on the options analysis, the consultant will develop a concept for the preferred option for child participation, specifically adapted to the Barnahus Network, including the following key cornerstones:

- Purpose and objectives, including e.g. added value, expected outcomes (for children, the network, network members, policy and practice reform) and contribution to quality, accountability and reform, etc.
- Participation model and structure, including e.g. the proposed size, composition, representation principles, age range, diversity and inclusion, mandate, engagement models, links to national Barnahus, etc.
- Governance, management and anchoring with the Barnahus Network, including e.g. role of the Barnahus Network Secretariat, the child participation working group, members, reporting and accountability, decision-making, communication channels and influence pathways, safeguarding and ethical consideration, feedback mechanisms, etc.
- Roles and responsibilities, including of the participating children, coordination/focal points and facilitators, safeguarding focal points, supporting adults, Barnahus network secretariat, steering group, child participation working group, members, etc.
- Human resources, including staffing needs, required competencies (child participation, trauma-informed practice, safeguarding etc), training requirements, time allocation for participation children and potential facilitators, support needs for children with special needs, etc.
- Financial resources, including coordination and staffing costs, costs for physical meetings, including travel and accommodation, interpretation and accessibility, safeguarding, capacity-building and training, compensation for participating children and facilitators, monitoring and evaluation, communication and materials, etc.
- Activities, including considerations for consultation with the participating children on preferred activities, consultation on policy, tools and other deliverables, input to the Barnahus network priorities and strategies, participation in events, co-creation of materials, peer-to-peer initiatives, outreach to other children etc.
- Safeguarding and ethical framework, including child safeguarding requirements and mechanisms, trauma-informed approaches, informed consent, risk assessment, confidentiality and data protection, managing experiences, inclusion and accessibility etc.

- Monitoring, evaluation and learning, including “measuring” participation quality and impact, feedback loops to children, influence on Barnahus network decisions, mechanisms for reform and continuous improvement, etc.
- Implementation “roadmap”, including preparatory phase, pilot phase (if needed), implementation, review, timeline and milestones.

Deliverable: Concept in English, 5+ pages, proposing the methodology and concept for the Network’s child advisory board.

Required Expertise

The consultant/team should demonstrate:

- Expertise in child participation and children’s rights
- Expertise in Barnahus or similar services
- Expertise in child safeguarding
- Experience in working with child participation initiatives
- Experience with trauma-informed approaches
- Knowledge of multidisciplinary approaches and services working with cases concerning violence against children
- Excellent English written and communication skills
- Experience working with different national contexts, international networks and organisations is welcome.
- Ability to work independently, efficiently and in a structured and solution-oriented manner with a capacity for flexibility and change.
- Excellent organisational and planning skills.

The Barnahus Network is committed to safeguarding children. The successful candidate will be required to undergo appropriate background checks, which may include criminal record checks, reference checks, and verification of qualifications, in accordance with our safeguarding policy.

Timing

The deadline for completing the assignment is 30 September 2026. The work should be planned so that there is adequate time for desk research, drafting, consultation and review of the deliverables.

Budget

The Barnahus Network will pay a lump sum of maximum 20 000 EUR, including all taxes, for this assignment. The selection of the successful candidate will include analysis of sound financial principles, added value and cost effectiveness.

Expression of interest

Please send an expression of interest, outlining your proposal for completing the assignment within the proposed timing and budget to Olivia Lind Haldorsson, olivia.lind.haldorsson@barnahus.eu by 10 April 2026.